



Newborn Screening Tests

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Why does my baby need newborn screening tests?

All babies must have newborn screening tests. Most babies are born healthy, but some may have health problems that are not easy to see. Screening tests can find these problems. If problems are found early, treatment can help prevent serious medical conditions or death.

How will my baby be tested?

Before you leave the hospital, a health care professional will take a few drops of blood from your baby's heel. The hospital will send the blood sample to a newborn screening lab. Your baby's hearing also will be tested. Testing may be done with a small earphone, microphone, or both. Also, testing with painless skin sensors (called pulse oximetry) will measure the oxygen levels in your baby's blood. Low blood oxygen levels can be a sign of a heart problem.

How will I get the results of the tests?

The results of some tests (hearing and pulse oximetry) may be available before you leave the hospital. Blood test results will take longer. Your baby's doctor should get the results and share them with you. In some cases, your state health department will give you the results. Ask about results when you see your baby's doctor. Make sure that your hospital and your baby's doctor have your correct address and phone number.

Why do some babies need to be retested?

Some babies may need another blood test. The reasons for this may include the following:

- You leave the hospital before the baby is 24 hours old.
- Your state requires a second blood test for all babies.
- Not enough blood was collected for the first test.
- The results of the first test are not clear.
- The results of the first test show a possible health problem.

Retesting does not necessarily mean that your child will have a health problem.

What if my baby needs to be retested?

Your baby's doctor or the state health department will contact you if your baby needs to have another blood test. They will tell you why your baby needs to be retested and what to do next. If your baby needs to be retested, plan to get the repeat test done right away.

What if I have questions?

Ask your baby's doctor if you have questions or concerns. There may be other tests that you would like your baby to have besides those required in your state. For more information, contact your state health department's newborn screening program, or visit Baby's First Test online at www.babysfirsttest.org.

If you have further questions, contact your obstetrician–gynecologist.

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